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ABSTRACT

This report summarizes papers presented and the resulting discussions at a conference focused on key issues emerging from the 1994 United Nations International Year of the Family and how these issues should be reflected in policies for families in Great Britain. The papers addressed the following topics: (1) specific achievements of the United Kingdom International Year of the Family (Joanna Foster); (2) the development of an institutionalized set of family-friendly workplace policies (Ceridwen Roberts); (3) standardizing relationship and parenting education in schools and within teacher training courses (Erica De'Ath); (4) relationship education in the context of the National Curriculum (Sue Tuckwell); (5) factors affecting the changing relationship between work and family responsibilities (Peter Moss); (6) how the pattern of employment varies between men and women and across different household types (Jonathan Wadsworth); (7) the media's perception of the two major political parties' attitudes to family issues (Mary Ann Sieghart); (8) a clinical viewpoint of the role of fathers (Paul Brown); (9) growing concerns about absent fathers (Janet Walker); and (10) an action agenda for policy and practice which suggested serious examination of relationship education, strengthened connections between work and family, strengthened family support services, examination of divorce laws, and formation of a high-level group to review the purpose of marriage. (David French). (KB)

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BEYOND THE YEAR OF THE FAMILY: DEFINING THE AGENDA

A ST CATHARINE'S CONFERENCE
HELD AT CUMBERLAND LODGE
FEBRUARY 1995



St Catharine's Conference Report No. 17

Introduction

St Catharine's Conferences are an important part of the work of the King George VI and Queen Elizabeth Foundation of St Catharine's. Focusing on a variety of contemporary issues, they are intended to bring together people representative of a range of interest groups and of society in general.

The focus of this conference was to discuss key issues which had emerged out of the 1994 UN International Year of the Family (IYF) and how they should be reflected in policies for families. The key issues which were tackled included the development of an institutionalised set of family-friendly policies in the

workplace; facilitating the equal sharing of care and domestic responsibilities between men and women through collaboration with employers and government; standardising relationship and parenting education in schools and within teacher-training courses.

In his address of welcome, **Tim Slack** gratefully acknowledged the contributions that **Barclay's Bank** and **RELATE** had made to the funding of the conference. He also thanked RELATE for their co-operation in planning the conference.

1 What did the Year Achieve?

Summary

The UN International Year of the Family achieved much in raising awareness of family related issues in the workplace, in schools and in the domestic sphere. This conference focused on the means by which these issues could be implemented and standardised in this country.

It was recognised that many external and attitudinal factors are going to influence how family welfare is likely to evolve. As labour market patterns change and attitudes towards marriage, divorce and children alter, we are having to reassess the way in which we perceive the family and its rôle. The growing diversity of family forms caused by divorce, re-partnering, co-habitation, and increasing numbers of single parents, means that the traditional concept of the family unit is under challenge. Problems such as abuse, neglect, lack of parenting skills and relationship education training, the anomalies of the benefit system, and disregard for the need to tailor conditions of employment to care and work responsibilities, need to be tackled. It is up to government, less committed to dealing with family welfare issues than its European counterparts, to take the lead in establishing a policy for families which could help to reconcile employment, care and parental responsibilities to changing social and economic circumstances.

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Joanna Foster hoped to use the conference to look beyond the UK IYF and to work collectively on ways of translating into action some of the messages which came out of it.

Joanna Foster referred to the closing meeting of participating members of the IYF held recently in Bratislava. There was a strong consensus about some of the issues that had been thrown up in countries right across the political, cultural and geographical spectrum. It demonstrated how similar were many of the issues facing the UK IYF and those being experienced in other countries. This was despite the diversity of family forms and the particular challenges nations and regions face.

Some specific conclusions were reached. Primarily, it was recognised that families matter and that their economic, emotional and physical well-being, and the economic and social well-being of each of our countries, were inter-related. Furthermore, much needs to be done in

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order to encourage thinking prevention rather than thinking cure, central to which is investing in family-friendly policies. Other observations included the issue of families' roles and responsibilities in the 1990s and ways of adapting to the changing structure of families, equal opportunities issues for women, the growth of domestic violence and abuse against women and children within the household and measures to counter it and the importance of the rights of children and the UN's Convention on the Rights of Children.

In the UK, the main aims of IYF were to focus on the role the family plays in the community as a whole and to make our society more family-friendly. It was about listening to families right across the social and economic spectrum in order to learn from them directly about the reality of their lives. It concentrated on two specific areas: families and work, and families and relationships.

Britain is not a very family-centered society

The issue of families and work was played out against the background of a rapidly changing labour market and workplace, shifting work patterns, the growth of the female work-force, the decline of men's traditional full-time work status and increases in part-time, temporary and contractual work. The debate centred around how to achieve a better balance for men and women between paid work responsibilities and family responsibilities. As a response to these and other issues affecting working families, the thirty six point *Family Friendly Employment Agenda* was produced and endorsed by both the CBI and TUC. It offered practical policies and provided a useful standard of what family-friendly employment means in addition to setting out principles for good practice.

We have failed to adapt our policies and practices to the needs of increasingly diverse family structures

Secondly, conferences throughout the Year discussed the changing relationships between men and women, parents and grandparents and the inadequacy of parenting skills education. The Family Challenge programme was set up to reach the grass-roots family and tease out some of the factors which go into creating a family-friendly community. Work with families by the UK Council for the IYF revealed that Britain is not a very family-centred society and that the problems posed by poor housing, inadequate benefits for 16-18 year olds and continuing violence both at work and in the home continue to impede efforts to reverse this phenomenon. We have failed to adapt our policies and

practices to the needs of increasingly diverse family structures.

The *Family Agenda for Action*¹ was produced at the end of the Year to address some of these issues and suggest possible ways in which the needs of families might be placed on the agenda. Recommendations included:

- The need to put the well-being of families at the heart of policy-making, listen to family experiences, and ensure that all those providing services work in partnership.
- Families need to have the right amount of work for a decent standard of living. There needs to be adequate compensation for those who care for a dependent family member.
- Relationship and parenting education should be more widely available.
- Create a child-friendly society where children are welcomed rather than tolerated.

The Year has yielded several positive outcomes. These include greater acceptance of the diversity of families; recognition of the need to work together as groups and to determine common aims; reconciliation of work and family responsibilities; keeping politicians briefed on the need to listen to and respond to families' needs; more co-ordinated research to evaluate the cost effectiveness of family friendly policies and investment by weighing them against the enormous costs of family breakdown.

Joanna Foster concluded with an appeal to the conference delegates to use this time in order to seek ways of ensuring that the issues raised in the course of the Year are kept firmly on the agenda. The efforts of 1994 must not lose momentum as we enter 1995.

► Discussion concentrated on strategies for putting into action some of the conclusions reached at the end of 1994 and in what ways British family organisations can draw from the experiences and good practice of other UN and European countries.

Australia and the efforts of its government to facilitate the implementation of family friendly employment policies was held up as an example of good practice. The Australian Government provides generous grants to the Institute for Family Studies and co-ordinates multilaterally with the Federal States in formulating a strategy and specific goals for action in family welfare issues. One participant explained how family organisations in the UK had given up asking for a government response and were now forging partnerships with the business community, voluntary and religious groups in order to put family welfare issues on the agenda.

There was concern over our inability to listen to the needs of children. As a society, we are not particularly child-friendly and we have a tendency to decide their needs for them. The clergy was criticised for failing to adapt to changing family patterns and lifestyles. This led on to the issue of morality and how

1. *Family Agenda for Action*, UN International Year of the Family, 1994.

society acquires its values and ethics; it was felt that family, schools and church had essentially failed to provide good rôle models and that there may be a place for business to exercise some responsibility for the welfare of its employees and their family commitments.

Finally, there was a warning against getting carried away with good intentions and strategies, which, though fine and laudable, lose sight of reasonableness and may be construed as impractical. Despite good intentions, businesses are often concerned with the need to keep costs to a minimum. Therefore, family pressure groups need to work within the bounds of what is feasible and attempt to reach a consensus on where the responsibilities for family welfare lie.

2 Defining Principles

Ceridwen Roberts presented in draft form a set of principles for family policy which had been produced by the Family Organisations Group. The group was composed of the Family Policy Studies Centre, National Carers Association, RELATE, National Stepfamilies Association, One Plus One and the National Council for One Parent Families.

Ensuring that family policy is put on the agenda has required a "back-door" approach

In order to contextualise the reasons behind the principles, the speaker explored Britain's traditional approach to family issues. In contrast to many other European countries, the UK does not have a good institutional set of arrangements to be family-minded, nor even an explicit family policy. Ensuring that family policy is put on the agenda has required a "back-door" approach, primarily through general social policy issues. For some years, family organisations have been pressing for an integrated approach to family policies, though as yet there has not been a significant change in institutional arrangements. To press the case, the six organisations set out to identify a set of principles to inform the development of a public policy for families. The group recognised that these draft principles had some limitations and invited constructive comments on how to render them more effective.

Ceridwen Roberts reminded us that there is still very little public acceptance of the need for coherent and co-ordinated family policies or knowledge of how it should be done. Even the IYF *Family Agenda for Action* mentions very little about how the family as an issue ought to relate to public policy. Apart from the statement "Government should improve cross-departmental consultation and co-ordination on family matters", no further recommendations were made on how government could co-ordinate an official fam-

Speakers

Dr Paul Brown, Chartered Clinical and Occupational Psychologist

Erica DeAth, Chief Executive, National Stepfamily Association

Joanna Foster, President, RELATE

David French, Director, RELATE

Peter Moss, Senior Research Officer, Thomas Coram Research Unit

Ceridwen Roberts, Director, Family Policy Studies Centre

Mary Ann Sieghart, Assistant Editor, *The Times*

Sue Tuckwell, Counsellor and Trainer, RELATE, Bristol

Dr Jonathan Wadsworth, Research Fellow, National Institute for Economic and Social Research

Janet Walker, Director, Relate Centre for Family Studies

ily policy. The Government still feels that politicians have no rôle affecting how people form their social, personal and family relationships. Rather, advice on such matters should come from within the extended family and the wider community, specifically voluntary bodies. However, by the end of the Year, it was acknowledged that developing an inter-departmental approach to policies relating to families was essential and the Minister for Health, Virginia Bottomley, had agreed to involve Ministers from other Departments who would meet and examine the impact of policies on the rôle of the family as a whole.

The principles consisted of six main points:—

- Children thrive in stable families where they can be nurtured in safety, free from serious or continuing conflict. Wherever possible, they will benefit from the chance to learn from both their parents as well as other family members.
- Most adults benefit from mutual commitment in a stable, loving relationship with one other adult. This relationship is still most commonly expressed and publicly recognised through marriage despite the growth of cohabitation in recent years.
- Dependent children are entitled to unconditional love and to adequate parenting. Parenting requires a commitment lasting through childhood, regardless of whether parents are living with or apart from their children.
- Children's interests are likely to be best served if their parents have an intention to achieve a lasting relationship with each other when they have a child.
- The interests of the parents and children sometimes differ. When this occurs the interests of the

children should always be central to the decisions parents take.

- Where adult relationships reach a point of irretrievable breakdown, the principle aim of policy should be to minimise any damage to the health and well-being of all those involved, particularly children.

► The focus of the discussion was to look at ways of improving the principles and making them more directly relevant to the public policy debates they are seeking to inform.

In general the principles were well-received and there was praise for the child-centred approach of the authors. However, criticism was made of their too obvious generality and the lack of clarity about how they actually relate to public policy.

Some felt that the principles had failed to represent the needs of ethnic minorities with different religious and cultural backgrounds and one-parent or homosexual families. However, in response, it was made clear that the principles set out to avoid presenting the virtues of any specific type of family. The use of the term 'family' was without reference to cultural, religious or other background. The authors also acknowledged that grandparents were not explicitly mentioned. It was pointed out that, in cases of family breakdown, grandparents often lose contact with the children and thus deprive parents and children of an important area of support.

Similarly, it was felt that the deliberate child-centred approach neglected the needs of adolescents. However, the use of the term dependants was designed to cover all children up to the age of sixteen; in other words, when they are at their most vulnerable. Similarly, the term "adult" is broad enough to include any kind of relationship, whether homosexual or otherwise, and refers to the common need for a committed and loving relationship. Indeed, the rationale behind the principles was not to present an ideal image of the family or try to cover all the different types of family structure. They were conceived as a guide for good practice in family and parenting relationships.

Some felt that the wording of the document does not make clear how the principles are expected to relate to public policy for families. This is because, unfortunately, the main political parties have still not accepted the notion that families' life is affected by public policy, nor that public policies set the framework for the private choices we make. The principles are only a first step to providing basic guidelines for a coherent family policy and the institutional arrangements necessary to underpin this.

3 The Role of Education

This session was addressed by two speakers who looked at how relationship skills education is being implemented in schools, first, on a curriculum level, and secondly, at local level.

Erica DeAth explored the rôle of education within schools in what is called relationship education. She focused specifically on the rôle of the school, basing her presentation on a book she recently co-authored on parent education and support².

2. G. Pugh, E. DeAth and C. Smith, *Confident Parents, Confident Children: Policy and practice in parent education and support*, National Children's Bureau, 1994.

While the most enduring influences on children, during their early years in particular, are their parents and close friends, once a child reaches statutory school age the power of factors outside the family increases. The National Curriculum (1989) requires schools to promote the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils and prepare them for the opportunities, responsibilities and experience of adult life.

The National Curriculum Council (NCC) identifies, among others, two themes to cover parenting and the values of family relationships and responsibilities:— education for citizenship and health education

Courses on citizenship should incorporate three broad areas: the nature of the community; rôles and responsibilities in a pluralist society; the duties, responsibilities and rights of being a citizen; and five other components which were intended to explore everyday concerns: the family; democracy in action; the citizen and the law; work, employment and leisure and public services. With regard to the family it was suggested that areas of study may include: the importance of the family for physical and spiritual well-being, relationships and responsibilities, and images of the family and marriage in the media.

Health education would deal with raising awareness of different types of family, an understanding of rôles within the family, and some understanding of relationships. This would encourage skills such as understanding the importance of feeling positive about oneself and others, being aware of the part that family life can play in happy and fulfilling relationships, recognising that some individuals have special needs, and knowing how to put into practice child care skills.

Unfortunately, consequent to serious concerns about over-crowding in the curriculum, only 2.5% of the timetable — approximately one period per week — is reserved for sex education and careers education. This is a long way from the original vision and research suggests that in some schools the cross-curricular themes mentioned above are not being addressed at all. In general, surveys have shown that while many schools have written policies for health education, far fewer had done so for the newer themes, like citizenship.

Much is being done. Organisations such as RELATE are providing structured programmes of courses, involved directly with pupils, and there are numerous sex education packs for all stages of school learning. However, on a less positive note, though family life education draws upon a wide range of curriculum subjects, its effectiveness often depends upon the teacher's skill in stimulating classroom discussion of attitudes, values and beliefs. Teachers need to feel confident in dealing with sensitive and controversial issues, yet they are often inadequately prepared. Similarly, programmes focusing on family matters rely too

heavily on written work; consequently, lessons become boring and fail to promote learning with understanding, key elements in relationship education teaching. Indeed there has been very little evaluation of teaching resource packs or of programmes such as Personal and Social Education.

There is still little evidence of a co-ordinated approach to family life education in schools

In short, there is still little evidence of a co-ordinated approach to family life education in schools. There are many impediments to this. Relationship education has been the victim of legislative changes which have led to an expansion of the curriculum, but which allow less time for broader subjects related to the education of the whole person. Moreover, with the reduction in the rôle of local education authorities and the introduction of local management of schools, it is difficult to determine what is going on. Finally, family education is increasingly dependent on the interest of individual teachers and the support of heads. The apparent inadequacy of training and support made available to them makes their task even harder.

Sue Tuckwell spoke of her experiences as a relationship education trainer with RELATE, where she runs courses for teachers on stress management, the effect of divorce on children, and counselling skills.

What exactly does relationship education mean? Firstly, it is a participative experience, in which teachers and children discover together what being in a relationship means and helping people towards a more positive view of relationships. Secondly, it is about inculcating skills such as negotiation, communication, co-operation and compromise within families where there are a multiplicity of relationships and non-blood ties. Thirdly, it is encouraging people to renew existent relationships, improve consistency in relationships and deal with their affective nature. Finally, it helps to normalise some of the emotional responses people confront in the course of their life experiences.

Many young, inexperienced teachers feel inadequate to the challenge of dealing with children's personal problems

Research shows that teachers are keen to promote relationship education. However, many feel that their efforts are ineffective and it is therefore important to develop a strategy in which this considerable energy is properly channelled, despite under-funding, poor resources and low prioritisation. Nonetheless, the rôle of relationship education in schools poses certain

dilemmas. Teachers experience tension between what is required of them in the National Curriculum and what they experience on a day-to-day basis whether in the formal context of the classroom or outside. Newly-qualified teachers feel well-equipped at the level of being able to do the job — delivering and planning lessons — but less confident about dealing with relationship issues. Many young, inexperienced teachers feel inadequate to the challenge of dealing with children's personal problems and are not equipped with the skills to respond to these when they occur, particularly with regard to children's different family situations.

In this context, RELATE is concerned with promoting a module into teacher-training which will help the teacher to deal with relationship issues outside the classroom context.

Other initiatives introduced by RELATE include "What about me?" and "What is the Family?". The first is about the child's experience of divorce and informs teachers about emotional processes and age-related reaction to divorce and separation. The second is a series of workshops for sixth formers which allows young people to speak about their own experiences and discuss visions of what a family ought to be. This is important since they are sometimes apprehensive about their ability to form consistent and effective relationships because personal experiences have undermined their confidence. Relationship education gives them choices and helps prevent a repetition of relationship patterns they themselves may have experienced. Another example is through counselling and group work with persons experiencing low self-esteem in which they are encouraged to analyse where their low self-esteem is coming from and to work out strategies to alleviate it.

Relationship education helps prevent a repetition of relationship patterns

Finally, there are a lot of good resources for training newly-qualified teachers and for the provision of in-service training. However, they are not being co-ordinated in an effective way for teachers and there is a need for more user-friendly training packages which are both realistic and contemporary and allow teachers to find out which are the best materials to use. Prevention is part of the attraction of relationship education for funding bodies. Creating an ethos in schools where relationships are recognised for what they are and discussed freely is a step towards preventing the cost of picking up the pieces when they fail.

► Discussion focused around how relationship education can best be implemented and the immense difficulties of incorporating it in the National Curriculum.

Increasingly, funding has become central to the relationship education debate. Initially, LEA advisors developed a working partnership with agencies such as RELATE to provide coherent relationship education programmes for schools. Now that this has petered out, independent, non-school organisations need to market their services and tailor their courses to the requirements of individual schools rather than developing a standardised training package. It is now up to the school and, whereas some schools recognise the need to provide funds for training in this area, for others it is a low priority.

Relationship education in the context of the function of education became a focus of debate. It was agreed that schools provide a major resource in the community and are ideal venues for running parent groups as well as a forum for bringing together pupils and parents to discuss relationship issues. However, it was felt that the National Curriculum tends to prioritise individualism and market values over the development of the whole person and that is doing profound damage to children. Education clearly needs a re-articulation of what is important and taking relationship education seriously is just one step in this direction. It would also demonstrate that social development is being given equal parity to educational development. There is still some scepticism regarding the value of relationship education in schools and one way of eradicating this would be to evaluate its impact.

It was remarked that British reticence with regard to discussing parenting and family issues constitutes a serious impediment to institutionalising relationship skills education. In Britain, unlike in other developed countries, there is a stigma about asking for help with parenting problems and, though many parent organisations exist, their services are under-exploited.

Related to this issue is the question of confidentiality and the difficulties of overcoming traditional teacher/pupil power relations still existing within schools. There was concern that this inherent inequality makes it difficult for pupils to speak freely unless an outsider unconnected with the school is running the sex education programme. Research has confirmed these findings and clearly one of the challenges for relationship educators in the future is to make the school more child-friendly.

4 Work and Families: Changing Patterns

In chairing this session, **Joanna Foster** emphasised that reconciling work and family responsibilities is central to the family welfare debate.

Peter Moss used statistical evidence and research to establish the main factors affecting the changing relationship between employment and family life and suggested some areas where action might be appropriate.

Three observations were made on the factors influencing the changing relationship between employment and family life:—

- Increasing compression and intensification of employment in the 25–49 age-range, particularly with growing employment among women with children (from 49% in 1981 to 59% in 1992), an increasing proportion employed full-time; employ-

ment among fathers remaining high; and falling employment among men under 25 and over 50, partly due to increasing numbers entering further education and taking early retirement.

- Compression has been accompanied by polarisation. Employment growth has been concentrated among certain groups such as women with fewer children or those with higher qualifications. The losers include single mothers, black women, low-skilled and those with unemployed partners. We are therefore witnessing a polarisation between work-rich and work-poor families and between no-work, some-work and full-work families. This is leading to increased poverty and inequality among British families.
- The pace of change in both employment and family life is increasing; changing working conditions and ways of working; increasing cohabitation, partnership breakdown, technology, lone parenthood and re-partnership. Unfortunately, little work has been done on the impact of employment change on families and vice-versa. Also, change offers both opportunities and risks since life is increasingly unpredictable and insecure, both in the workplace and at home.

"Family-friendly" practices in the workplace are not widespread

On the other hand, there are several areas where change has been slow. One of them is in attitudes to gender roles. Surveys show that a majority of men and women believe that mothers with young children should be at home. Mothers are still seen as primarily responsible for child-care with fathers as the bread-winners who "help out" at home. Debate in the media focuses around the changing role of men as bread-winners and more attention is given to discussion about women as workers and mothers: work and family life is still seen as primarily a women's issue, rather than as an issue for men. Further, "family-friendly" practices in the workplace are not widespread and are often granted at managerial discretion, being predominantly targeted on and used by women.

Government maintains that work/family issues are essentially private matters in which the rôle of the state is marginal

Government still maintains that work/family issues are essentially private matters in which the rôle of the state is marginal and support for working parents depends primarily upon informal networks and private arrangements. Similarly, management of the relationship between employment and family life in dual earner households often relies upon women working

short atypical hours in part-time jobs. These attitudes distinguish the UK from most European countries.

Four areas need addressing:—

- How to develop a life course approach to the relationship between employment and family life which recognises that men and women have "caring" relationships throughout their working lives.
- How to re-allocate time and work over the life-course, between men and women and between employed and non-employed men and women. This will mean moving away from the male model of continuous and long hours employment to patterns that are more fluid and respond to care responsibilities.
- To define who has responsibility for helping men and women to manage employment and family life. This may include developing an infrastructure of services for children and introducing a basic set of leave entitlements for workers with care responsibilities.
- Achieving a proper balance of values between the importance we attach to economic and social considerations. This may involve changing our attitudes towards citizens who are not in the labour market (e.g. children). In Nordic countries strong statutory leave entitlements for parents of young children reflects the importance they attach to the rights of children as citizens with specific needs and interests.

Specific actions which might be taken include:—

- Preparation of a Green Paper to analyse the relationship between employment and family life, to propose objectives and priorities and to outline policy options. A White Paper laying out a statement of intent and defining an implementation programme would then follow.
- The implementation programme would include a range of measures, such as "time account" schemes, (currently evolving in Belgium and Denmark). This means giving all men and women a period of time they are entitled to draw upon over their working lives and which can be used as full-time or part-time leave.
- Actions need to be allocated to different responsible partners — trade unions, government, employers. Successful partnership requires frameworks to encourage and support partnership, both at local and national level, and clarity about the responsibility of each partner.
- Employers and their workforces need to be helped to develop responsive workplaces.

At present, much more work is necessary to work out how much these actions might cost and who they would benefit.

Jonathan Wadsworth explored the results of new research into the deficiencies of the present benefit system by looking at how the pattern of employment varies between men and women and across different household types³.

The labour market has been changing significantly over the course of the last twenty years. The major trend has been the equalisation of employment across gender. Net employment is broadly unchanged, although those jobs that have been created have gone primarily to women, resulting in a decline in male employment and an increase in female employment. The latter increase has been mainly among higher skilled women and the decline in male employment has been mainly amongst less skilled men.

Looking at these trends by household status reveals some interesting patterns. Though employment for single women follows the same trends as for single men, most of the increase in female employment has come from women with a working partner. In 1975 50% of women with a working partner were in employment; by 1993 this figure had risen to 70%. Employment among women whose partners were not working has actually fallen by 10%. Similarly, decline of employment for men has been mainly among those whose partners are not working.

If we examine the effect that children may have upon these employment patterns, it appears that having children is not as important a condition for being out of work for women as one would assume. It is usually where the partner happens to be without a job as well. The biggest increase in employment has come from women whose partners are working and who have children. This may be because greater disposable income from two parents working makes child-care more affordable and removes the impediment to the second partner going out to work.

The net result of these changes is a marked polarisation between work-rich and work-poor families. Consequently, certain groups are staying out of employment a lot longer. Why has this happened? People are more likely align with partners of a similar educational background, and levels of education are important factors in determining access to work rates. Changing skills requirements and decreasing demand for unskilled workers may have adversely affected the ability of work-poor families to gain continuous and well-remunerated employment.

However, the decline in the chances of getting work cannot wholly be explained by the above factors. One of the most noticeable developments in the labour market has been the changing nature of jobs that are on offer, in particular the growth of part-time and temporary jobs. These have a high turnover, come

3. P Gregg and J Wadsworth, *More Work, Fewer Households?*, National Institute for Economic and Social Research, 1995.

around a lot faster in the stock of vacancies and are beginning to dominate the vacancy stock. Whereas in 1977 only one-third of vacancies were part-time, by 1993 it was about 40-45%, that is, nearly half of all job vacancies. Furthermore, if one examines the consequences of this with regard to disposable income, it appears that 40% of jobs taken up by the unemployed were paying less than a quarter of the medium average earnings — less than £50 per week.

The net result of these changes is a marked polarisation between work-rich and work-poor families

Similarly, an examination of rates of access to work demonstrates that they are three times as high for women in part-time jobs whose partner is at work compared with women whose partners are not at work. Given the fact that 40% of jobs are paying a quarter of the medium average earnings, the sort of jobs on offer can only really be taken up by households with the additional support of an earned income. The problem is that many women who are unemployed cannot take up part-time work because jobs of less than 16 hours per week do not entitle them to receive Family Credit. Similarly, the income support system imposes qualitatively high rates if one partner works while the other remains unemployed. The present benefit system clearly militates against work-poor households taking the sort of jobs increasingly on offer in the labour market today. Therefore, some reform of the benefit system is essential if this obstacle to getting work is to be removed.

► Discussion focused around attitudes to part-time jobs and explored ways in which the continuing polarisation between work-rich and work-poor families can be reversed.

There is little evidence that, as in the US, people will begin to take on two or three part-time jobs to bring incomes up to a living wage. Part-time work is still seen as a poor alternative to full-time work, which offers entitlements, career breaks and opportunities for training leading to promotion and better job security. Although part-time work suits many, mostly women with care responsibilities, and provides the labour market with a flexible labour force which employers can tap into at periods convenient to them, it does not yet provide the benefits which come with a full-time wage. Therefore, it is essential to determine the underlying purpose behind part-time jobs: are they supplying a demand for ever-increasing labour flexibility or do they provide a temporary stop-gap for economic recovery? Trends suggest that few in part-time work go on to full-time work later; they either stay in part-time jobs or leave the labour market altogether.

The practice in Nordic countries was held up as an example of sound family-friendly employment policies where a time account scheme is operated to allow labour flexibility without loss of income, job security or career opportunities. It accommodates periods throughout people's working lives where varying care responsibilities may impede upon their ability to work. Based upon a state/employer partnership, it removes the disparity between maternity and paternity leave entitlements. Unfortunately, in the UK an unhelpful public debate continues

to fuel hostility to the very concept of parental leave as a costly and unnecessary measure. There is a need to convince both government and employers that parental leave is primarily a social and not a labour issue.

5 The Political Response

Mary Ann Sieghart from *The Times* took a broad view of the media's perception of the two major political parties' attitudes to family issues and how they are likely to formulate their policies in the future. She argued that there is a degree of *laissez faire* in the way that politics deals with the family. As a parent working in a competitive environment, Ms Sieghart has found the family increasingly marginalised from the world of work; responsibility for its welfare is very much felt to be the domain of the private sphere.

As party in government, the Conservative Party was examined first. The Year of the Family coincided, rather unfortunately, with the Back to Basics campaign. A barrage of bad publicity about the contradictions between stated Conservative Party values and the actual behaviour of some ministers considerably weakened the Government's authority with regard to family values. This may account for the poor response to the challenges set out in the Year and the apparent silence of the Ministry of Health on family issues. Furthermore, the Minister responsible for IYF has neither a Cabinet Committee nor a secretariat and does not even have the machinery to monitor what other departments are doing with regard to family issues, even though this is part of his job.

However, even the Conservative Party has had to take note of changing middle-class attitudes to the family and adapt its policies in the light of the continuing decline of the traditional family unit. Single parents and divorce are very real issues facing traditional Tory voters and female Conservative supporters were vocal in objecting to the scapegoating of lone-parents. There are growing numbers of women speakers at Conservative Party conferences, many of them successful, articulate and educated with full-time careers. Fewer and fewer male MPs are prepared to say outright that women should not be going out to work and there are some prominent examples within the party of female MPs who manage to balance a full-time political career with the demands of a family.

Although little has been done in the way of reform of the tax and benefit system which currently militates against lone parents and young men getting into work, even some right wing members of the Party are beginning to recognise that the rise in lone parenthood is as much a cultural phenomenon as a financial one. It is happening because society now tolerates the situation more. Increasingly, policies are geared towards getting young men off benefit and into work and helping women who are lone parents to obtain

employment. Although there are fears that the existence of lone-parent benefit may encourage never-married mothers, ministers are aware that cutting the benefit would penalise the children.

The scale of hostile reaction to the Child Support Agency (CSA) surprised Conservative MPs since they had not anticipated a backlash from second family fathers. Unfortunately, although there are many women who have gained by the CSA in that they are no longer reliant on benefit and are able to go out to work, their satisfaction is not as vocal as the men's protests about the injustices of the Agency. Although the CSA requires a serious reassessment of its practices, the Government is unlikely to go back on its principle since it is potentially a very effective means of discouraging young men from getting young women pregnant casually.

If the story of the Conservative Party on family issues is about overcoming taboos, then the same could be said of the Labour Party, although the set of taboos is slightly different. The Party began from a male approach to family life — the man going out to work, the woman staying at home — though this progressed in the 1970s and 1980s on to creating opportunities for women to go out to work, although the male model of long hours and continuous employment remained. The benefit of part-time jobs has only recently been acknowledged by the Party — a couple of years ago they were seen as a way of concealing the actual unemployment figures — and gradually the idea that families should be able to choose how to combine earning and living and looking after their children according to their own values has gained acceptance.

Much of this is dealt with by the Social Justice Commission, the group set up by John Smith to re-examine the benefit system in order to remove the disincentives to the wife having a job when the husband is unemployed and also to make the system more consistent with current working practices and patterns. On the subject of parenting, the Commission broke with some important Labour principles. Whereas in the past, the Party has laid great emphasis on rights, it is now acknowledging the importance of duties and responsibilities. This is evidenced in Tony Blair's comment that two parents are better than one (although he was keen to stress that this does not imply that single parents are necessarily at fault) and left-wing sociologists have produced research which indicates that children tend to do better if they come from families where both parents are living together. This implies that the left is starting to respond to society's changing attitudes towards focusing on the needs of the child.

If a Labour government is elected, some positive developments are expected, though they are likely to come in the form of work opportunities for women and the encouragement of family-friendly employment policies and practices. More child-care and

nursery education are also possible. However, there is little likelihood of obtaining a specific family policy since, compared to women's policies, it is low on the agenda. On the other hand, there will be a large overlap on what is being done for families and for women. If women's work opportunities are improved and the benefit system reformed, then families are likely to gain.

All parties will have to recognise the growing diversity of families

In general, all parties will have to recognise the growing diversity of families and the complexity of relationships within them. They must also come up with a few measures to arrest the escalating divorce rates and the appalling effects that failing marriages are having on children.

► Discussion focused around speculation on possible policy shifts in family welfare issues if Labour were to win the next election and how these changes might manifest themselves.

There was some concern about the way absent fathers are portrayed in the debate around the Child Support Act. Many families have been impoverished by the effects of retrospective maintenance legislation and there was criticism over the fact that though many men have taken on the responsibility of stepfamilies where the father is dead or in prison, this is not acknowledged either fiscally or in legislative terms. Similarly, it was questioned whether women have really benefited by being awarded maintenance instead of income support. In many cases, this has led to loss of benefit and further impoverishment. The consensus was that, while the underlying principles of the CSA were not in dispute, the badly constructed mechanisms for exacting payment and the many anomalies in legislation were undermining its effectiveness. The CSA seems incapable of distinguishing "can't pay" from "won't pay" cases.

In the event of a Labour government, few expected to see any great changes. On the other hand, attitudes to the family as a unit may shift and there should be a fresher and more idealistic approach to governing. The Labour Party has invested a great deal in women's rights and they will probably be made a cross-departmental issue. Although this is unlikely to be the case with family issues, the concerns are sufficiently inter-related for positive changes to be introduced to the benefit of women in their work and caring capacities. Unfortunately, as a consequence of campaigns to reinvigorate perceptions of the traditional family and men's and women's roles within it, the family has suffered from being perceived as conservative. Furthermore, the Labour Party is unlikely to invest in costly initiatives. Therefore, since the Labour Party favours the general principle of a National Curriculum, it may only be re-examined in order to allow teachers more independence over the way subjects are taught.

With regard to the debate over whether the institution of marriage constitutes the best context in which to bring up a family, there seemed to be a little political differentiation. Labour is less likely to be pro-marriage. The married couples' allowance, which was designed to recognise the costs associated with making the man the sole provider is unlikely to continue. Instead, policies will be based on the assumption

that, in cases where there are no child-care responsibilities, the woman is expected to go out to work.

6 The Rôle of the Father

This session was addressed by two speakers.

Paul Brown, in his capacity as a psychologist working in the field of relationships, explored fatherhood from a clinical viewpoint.

He proposed that a useful theory for defining the father's rôle is transactional analysis. It says that mothers give life, not only physical but also psychological, and fathers are the rôle model. The point is that the position for the male child is very different from the female child. For the male, the task in growing up is to differentiate and to possess. For the female growing up, the task is to assimilate and to attract.

The human being was compared to a highly-advanced computer. A great deal is there on the hard disk — the colour of the eyes, hair, size it will be and the probable cause of death. Parents are the software providers. Unfortunately, the speaker argued for differentiation between the sexes other than, as is the current trend in the Western world, denying the differences which leads to hybridisation. Hybridisation involves trying to eliminate essentially different dimorphic systems so that the originally differentiated type, male and female, become almost indistinguishable from one another. This is leading us into gross error since experimental work to establish the survival of fertilised human eggs in the male constitutes the ultimate act of hybridisation and is full of moral turpitude.

Our evolutionary biology argues for differences rather than similarities between men and women and there are good and wholesome reasons for these differences connected with the survival of the species. However, social evolution now moves at a very much faster rate than physical and emotional evolution and hybridisation is not the best means of grappling with this imbalance.

Indeed, one of the most despairing aspects of the rise of the feminist movement has been men's failure to respond to the challenge of women's growth over the last thirty years. One consequence of this has been that, while women are excited, if uncertain, about their options for the future, the generality of men are confused and fearful.

The conference was presented with a set of observations on the rôle of fathers which had not previously been articulated in public. It was suggested that men are rather deficient in attachment potential. The little they have is consumed during periods of courting, when they are under the effects of adrenaline and testosterone, or when they are fighting or playing

competitive games. In establishing relationships with women, the initial testosterone/adrenalin levels are confused with being attractive. As the surge decays, occasionally within a few days, usually within the first three years of marriage, man's capacity to stay weakens. The arrival of a child might either reinforce or decimate this process. Whether a man bonds or not with his child is a high risk business and depends upon the state of his relationship with his partner.

Biological fathers find it difficult to be social fathers unless a set of predisposing conditions exists

The conclusion to be drawn is that the male human system is imperfectly evolved for long-term relationships. As life expectancies rise, we have no idea as a society how to manage long-term relationships and there is no sensible debate about it either. Biological fathers find it difficult to be social fathers, unless a set of predisposing conditions exists such as body/brain chemistries.

Therefore, the primary rôle for fathers, in a social rather than biological sense, is to try to be a father, although this has been made difficult by the incongruity between social and physical evolution. It is in women's and children's interests to get this concept of being a father onto the agenda.

The attention fathers have been receiving recently suggests that there is growing concern about men's rôles as parents, argued **Janet Walker**. As household structures have changed dramatically this century, there appears to be an increasing marginalisation of men in relation to family life. We are left without some necessary blueprints for relationships, particularly those between men and their children.

Research studies undertaken by Janet Walker and her colleagues⁴ since the mid-1980s have led them to reflect on the controversial issue of so-called "absent fathers". The growth of children living in one-parent households, the majority with their mothers, has led to fathers being perceived as non-caring, irresponsible and neglectful of their responsibilities. Furthermore, those hemoaning the breakdown of the so-called "traditional family" have been quick to link the "absence" of fathers to increasing levels of juvenile crime.

Little research has been undertaken to understand how fathers relate to their children after divorce. Janet Walker and her team at Newcastle have consequently taken a closer look at parenting from a distance in order to tease out those factors which support or undermine fathers' relationships with their children

4. B Simpson, P McCarthy and J Walker, *Being There: Fathers After Divorce: An Exploration of Post-Divorce Fathering*, Relate Centre for Family Studies, University of Newcastle-upon-Tyne, 1995.

and to understand what kind of relationship is possible. The research focuses on post-divorce fatherhood and a number of related issues.

In Janet Walker's view, engaging men in the parenting of children remains a critical challenge even in the era of the "new man" and this is born out in current research. It examines the experiences of 91 fathers who were in the process of divorcing in 1986. All the fathers had to address basic problems of continuity and discontinuity in post-divorce familial relationships. What emerged was a complex picture of stresses and strains, despair and desperation. By 1992 a significant proportion of those studied were no longer in contact with their children and for most others the amount of contact had decreased over the six years. Several factors have been established to explain this phenomenon.

It is often the dynamic of the couple relationship which defines and structures the parental relationship and so fashions the way in which parental roles are allocated. In this context, other researchers have pointed out that fathers are rarely exclusively responsible for parental tasks, unlike most mothers, and that men rely heavily on their wives for information concerning the children. What men do as fathers is almost invariably shared with their spouse and they experience little individual interaction with the children. Subsequent arrangements following the break-up of the family are often due to the way fathers relate to their children in intact families.

It is often the dynamic of the couple relationship which defines and structures the parental relationship

The Newcastle studies have revealed low levels of communication and absence of trust between ex-spouses concerning children. Indeed, the longer-term happiness of some divorced parents depends on them having as little contact with each other as possible and does not bode well for the philosophy of shared parental responsibility. Fathers saw themselves as being subjected to deliberate campaigns aimed at permanently turning their children against them and mothers saw fathers as insensitive and irresponsible.

For divorced fathers, the incompatibility which contributes to the marriage failing continues so often in the experience of parenting. When resources are also lacking — adequate income, employment — the transition to being a "good father" at a distance is further impeded. Indeed, frequency of contact between fathers and their children after divorce is often related to social class, income, and employment status. Low income makes it difficult to preserve a "good" father-child relationship and can result in inability to pay maintenance and low self-esteem as a

parent. As financial pressures bite, resentment increases and communication is strained.

Another key factor is gender. Fathers were three times more likely to lose contact with their children if they were all daughters than if they were sons. Contact visits are frequently about "doing" things and may be more difficult for fathers with daughters. Fathers need to participate more in cross-sex parenting, although, unfortunately for post-divorce fathers, it is hard to change patterns which were established when both parents were living together.

There was a high cost for the 46% of fathers who had managed to re-negotiate a post-divorce role based upon good communication with ex-spouses. Stress results from managing "two lives" and there are serious financial implications. Many were lonely, maintaining communication with families at the expense of forming new relationships.

Fatherhood after divorce clearly has to be re-defined, re-negotiated and reconstructed

In the face of these observations, fatherhood after divorce clearly has to be re-defined, re-negotiated and reconstructed. We need to lower our expectation of what can be achieved if fathers are to achieve lasting relationships with their children, and their ex-partners, as co-parents. Provision of training and support on how to be a "good father" could help resolve this. As the divorce rate increases and cohabitation becomes an increasingly popular form of living arrangement, the way parenting roles are executed in a variety of family structures will become an important issue for the next millennium and devising a policy which encourages a meaningful parental role for fathers after divorce provides a convenient starting point for tackling it.

► Discussion focused around the extent in which the behaviour of men and women is dictated by biological and psychological or societal factors.

There was support for the important work being carried out at Newcastle and it was felt that such research needs to be welded into our thinking about family policy in general. Other studies in this field had borne out many of the findings, in particular the non-resident parent's sense that parental rights and obligations as carers had somehow been abrogated by the divorce and re-partnering of the mother.

It was suggested that the debate about fathers often centres around women's criticisms of men's inadequacies and this may have the effect of emasculating men. The response was that women have moved beyond trying to understand the opposite sex and entered the man's world. We have need to revive the celebration of gender differences and try to see the world through one another's eyes; when men try to do things the way women do, it undermines their attractiveness and makes them uninteresting to women and vice versa.

It was asked why women have adapted rather well to a man's world and do not feel de-feminised, whereas men who share the joys and anxieties of child-rearing feel emasculated. This was

Discussion Groups

Two broad issues were discussed: education and the development of family-friendly employment policies. In both areas, engaging the active support and co-ordinating powers of Government in promoting a more family-friendly society was felt to be of paramount importance. Ways were suggested of involving the state in consolidating the work already taking place and developing individual initiatives:—

Education

- integrate relationship education into the whole educational approach and implement it through LEAs and educational institutions;
- incorporate a relationship education module into teacher-training courses;
- carry out independent evaluations of relationship education to measure its cost-effectiveness as a means of attracting funding;
- ensure that ante-natal classes cover parenting as well as birth. Otherwise, deliver information on parenting skills to all parents registering births.

Development of family-friendly employment policies

- introduce fiscal incentives which aim to produce a more equitable distribution of work between people and encourage employers to judge employees more by their output than by the number of hours they spend at their desk;
- implement a structure of partnership between government, employers, families and other agencies responsible for promoting a range of features, including flexible working hours, provision of child-care and parental leave. Employers should be encouraged to draw upon international good practice;
- change the benefit system to remove disincentives to work;
- alter the work culture so that parents who want to work more flexibly are not seen as having a diminished commitment to their job and offer promotion to job-sharers;
- initiate further research into assessing the effectiveness of family-friendly policies. Use this as ammunition to push forward legislative changes in the benefits system and child-care provision;

General

- submit to the government a set of issues to be tackled in a Green Paper under the heading of "National Policy for Families and Relationships". Two of the most important are that learning depends on practice and experience as well as teaching and that industry has an interest in the future generation and should invest in relationship and social skills training.

It was proposed that a small group of delegates from the conference should form a co-ordinating unit and act on behalf of agencies concerned with family issues. Their responsibilities might include partnership with schools, churches and other voluntary and community organisations and the dissemination of examples of good practice in family-centred employment policies by businesses. Furthermore, opinion research organisations should be engaged (Mori) to discover whether family welfare constitutes a significant political issue and present the findings to Government. The group could be responsible for co-ordinating ways of exploiting media and business contacts, researching the cost-effectiveness of family-centred employment policies and standardising materials for relationship education for all age groups, all with the aim of making the work of agencies involved in these activities more widely known.

also explained in terms of chemical and genetic processes. Studies of the brain and the eyes reveal that the female has infinitely greater powers of peripheral perception than the male and is far more adaptable. These differences are built into our system and are part of the processes by which men and women manage the external world. On the other hand, there are attitudinal questions to be raised about how we value tasks and work and the people in them. It was suggested that, socially and culturally, for a woman entering the male world this is seen as improvement on her status, whereas men who enter the world of women, or who perform traditionally women's tasks, are not perceived in the same way.

7 Overview of the Conference

David French took up the task of overviewing the conference and examined, with a six-point agenda, how to put some of the themes that had emerged into a framework of policy and practice.

A lot of common ground exists between many of the mainstream issues related to families. David French proposed to address those areas still to be debated and to suggest where the minds of policy-developers and opinion-makers should be focused in the future.

The speaker, in concentrating on the issue of family relationships, contended that our prejudices about the institutions which govern family relationships have actually become an obstruction to our understanding of the relationships themselves. We need to forget briefly about the institutions and concentrate instead on the flows within them and on what happens within families that makes them work or fail. At a series of seminars run by RELATE in conjunction with the Nuffield Foundation at the start of IYF it was suggested that the institution of marriage might be abolished; if the law cannot make people happy, why bother with the legal institution at all? The answer offered to that question has been that people still wish to marry and that it would be more appropriate to institute a different way of using the law to support it.

Over the last ten years, Western society has come to understand the extent to which children are hurt by conflict between their parents as

much as by the ending of the relationship which may flow from that conflict. Researchers have moved on from discussing the consequences of institutional change to examining the consequences of different types of behaviour within them, a significant step forward. It seems more useful to focus on the changing relationships in families rather than on the institutions themselves, as a guide to how policy and practice for families might best be developed.

To achieve good relationships in the workplace requires us first and foremost to get them right in the home

It was suggested that we are poor at managing long-term relationships culturally. Recently, for example, recruitment for senior executive positions has stressed the ability to build relationships at all levels. To achieve good relationships in the workplace requires us first and foremost to get them right in the home. David French's agenda for action comprised the following points:—

- **Relationship education.** This needs to be taken much more seriously than it is at present. It also needs to be more broadly defined in order to include skills development, self-confidence and building and maintaining good relationships. Recommendations included:—
 - Develop teacher training programmes to give teachers the confidence to talk about relationship issues in the classroom.
 - Involve the community: GPs, health visitors, lawyers, religious leaders, public role models and the media.
 - Raise the level of public consciousness of the importance of good communication and better relationships.
 - Support family and community networks.
- **Strengthen connections between work and family.** In addition to child-care, this means reform of the benefit system, sensible work patterns, recruitment policy practices, career breaks, the right amount of work and earning an income which engenders self respect. Changing labour market structures mean that there is increasing difficulty in securing and holding a full-time job and this is impacting upon the capacity to build and maintain networks of families and friends.
- **Strengthen support services to families.** Less than £60,000 has been invested in evaluating the services of agencies like RELATE which attempt to prevent marriage breakdown, yet £115 million per year is spent by the CSA pursuing absent fathers for their post-divorce maintenance responsibilities. Clearly, there is inherent value in investing in counselling and other family support networks.

- **The rôle of fathers and the underlying principles behind the CSA.** Government is at fault for not allowing sufficient time to scrutinise legislation and this has engendered popular hostility to the CSA. Applying maintenance retrospectively and targeting those who take their financial responsibilities seriously have severely damaged the credibility of the system.
- **Examine divorce laws.** They need to be used to buttress the institution of marriage as well as promote a less damaging setting for marriages which do fail. The Lord Chancellor's Green Paper of 1993 proposes to make the minimum period one year for obtaining a divorce. This will encourage couples to reflect and consider the consequences of their actions with the help of counsellors. The main opposition to these proposals is based on a misunderstanding of the facts, when 75% of all divorces use fault grounds, taking a median time of just six months to complete.
- **A high-level group to review the purpose of marriage.** Forty percent are now set to fail; one in three children is now born out of wedlock. The situation calls for a fundamental reassessment of the institution, identifying both what is wrong and what is right with it and finding ways of enabling couples to re-negotiate the basis of their marriage rather than end it prematurely. Devoting vast resources to coping with the results of marital breakdown strongly suggests the need to strengthen support for marriage and for family relationships in general.
 - Discussion centred around points for action and ways of putting into practice some of the overriding issues raised in the course of the conference. The following points were highlighted:—
- Marriage has become too easy and there is little thought beforehand of what the commitment means. It was suggested that, prior to a license being granted, couples should undertake some education or training and resources should be concentrated on promoting crisis prevention in addition to crisis intervention.
- Workplaces must be convinced that providing flexible working hours and conditions for men in order that they can share some of the tasks of child-rearing is in the long-term interests of both parents and the well-being of society as a whole.
- Relationship education is a fundamental requirement. It should be normalised, accepted and made a part of people's general life experience. Similarly, encouraging self-esteem — from whence healthy relationships flow — should be a major part of the educational process.
- The creation of a strong, coherent, yet small, group of family organisations promoting common issues.
- It is vital to establish which kind of research — for example longitudinal rather than one-shot data — would enable us to understand the dynamics of families over time. It also needs to be more widely available. Many organisations are ignorant of the kind of important work going on into family welfare issues and there is a huge gulf between researchers and practitioners and those who need to know, such as politicians.

Conference report by Claire Greenhalgh

Participants

William Arnold, Head of the Family Policy Division, Lord Chancellor's Dept; **Rhiannon Barker**, Project Manager, Health Education Authority; **Lynne Berry**, Director, Family Welfare Association; **Dr Paul Brown**, Chartered Clinical and Occupational Psychologist; **Adrienne Burgess**, Research Fellow, Institute for Public Policy Research; **John Butterwick**, Trustee, St Catharine's; **Marcia Butterwick**, Marital Counsellor in a Private Practice; **Raj Chandra**, Commissioner at the Commission for Racial Equality; **Bronwen Cohen**, Director, Children in Scotland; **Erica DeAth**, Chief Executive, National Stepfamily Association; **Shelagh Diplock**, Director, Fawcett Society; **Carolyn Douglas**, Director, Exploring Parenthood; **Joanna Foster**, President, RELATE and Director of the BT Forum; **David French**, Director, RELATE; **John Graham**, Principal Research Officer, Research and Planning Unit, Home Office; **Claire Greenhalgh**, Conference Co-ordinator, St Catharine's; **Bill Halson**, Director, Katharine Allen Marriage and Advice Bureau; **Penrose Halson**, Managing Director, Katharine Allen Marriage and Advice Bureau; **Rachel Harrison**, Education Officer, BBC Continuing Education; **John Haskey**, Head of Social Statistics Unit, Office of Population Censuses and Surveys; **Eileen Hayes**, Advisor, NSPCC National Centre; **Janet Laithwaite**, Director of Training, RELATE; **Ann Logan**, Head of Public Relations, RELATE; **Francis Love**, Director, Marriage Counselling Scotland; **Dr Virginia Morrow**, Research Associate, Centre for Family Research, University of Cambridge; **Fiona McAllister**, Senior Research Officer, One Plus One Marriage and Partnership Research; **Peter Moss**,

Senior Research Officer, Thomas Coram Research Unit; **Elizabeth Mumford**, Mother's Union representative on IYF Ecumenical Committee; **Sheila Munro**, Publicity Officer, Parent Network; **Margaret Ohren**, Joint Co-ordinator, New Ways to Work; **Felicity Randall**, Training Officer, Mothers' Union and member of Family Life And Marriage Education (FLAME), Oxford Diocese; **Ceridwen Roberts**, Director, Family Policy Studies Centre; **Rabbi Jonathan Romain**, Director, Jewish Information and Media Service, Maidenhead; **Caroline Rowe**, Probation Service Division of the Home Office; **Richard Sax**, Family law solicitor, Manches and Co; **Carol Sheriff**, Director, Daycare Trust; **Mary Ann Sieghart**, Assistant Editor, *The Times*; **Tim Slack**, Principal of St Catharine's; **Peter Smith**, Inspector, Social Services Inspectorate; **Brian Tovey**, Principal, Health Education Team, School Curriculum Branch, Department for Education; **Dr John Tripp**, Senior lecturer and consultant paediatrician, Dept of Child Health, Postgraduate Medical School, University of Exeter; **Sue Tuckwell**, Counsellor and Trainer, RELATE; **Alexander Von Behr**, Director, Long-Range Parenting; **Jonathan Wadsworth**, Research Fellow, National Institute for Economic and Social Research, London; **Janet Walker**, Director, Relate Centre for Family Studies, University of Newcastle-upon-Tyne; **John Warwick**, Director, International Centre, National Institute for Social Work; **Dr Geoffrey Williams**, Director of Studies, St Catharine's; **Professor Richard Whitfield**, Hon. Chairman of the National Family Trust and Warden, St George's House, Windsor Castle; **Sally Witcher**, Director, Child Poverty Action Group.

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